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ABSTRACT

The Postal Academy program was designed in late 1969 to provide basic education skills and job opportunities for disadvantaged school dropouts and to give educational help to postal employees who were unable to qualify for advancement. To determine the effectiveness of the program, this study sought to: (1) identify changes in the students' academic achievement and motivation, (2) assess the effect of the program on the students' employment potential, (3) determine the value of staff development efforts, (4) determine the extent to which Postal Academies are involved in community affairs, and (5) identify characteristics of individuals served by the program. Based on information collected from field visits, interviews, and personal files, several findings and recommendations were stated. Among the findings were: (1) The Postal Academy had enrolled a cumulative total of 1,644 students as of the end of the third term in June 1971, (2) A little more than half of the current enrollees are male, (3) The objective of educating and motivating disadvantaged school dropouts is being achieved, and (4) The objective of upgrading lower-level postal employees was not achieved, which led to this part of the program being discontinued. (JS)

EVALUATION STUDY OF THE POSTAL ACADEMY PROGRAM

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EVALUATION STUDY OF THE POSTAL ACADEMY PROGRAM

Manpower Administration
Division of Program Evaluation
Special Evaluations Group

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DIGEST OF EVALUATION STUDY OF THE POSTAL ACADEMY PROGRAM

WHY THE STUDY WAS MADE

More than half of the financial support for the Postal Academy program consists of manpower funds originating in the Department of Labor. Because of the experimental nature of the program, the Department directed that an evaluation study be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the program. The Manpower Administration's Office of Policy, Evaluation, and Research (OPER) assumed responsibility for the study.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The following summarizes the primary objectives of the study:

* To identify changes in the students' academic achievement, and motivation for further training and education.

* To assess the effect of the program on the students' employment potential.

* To determine the value of staff development efforts in terms of program effectiveness and personal career potential and growth.

* To determine the extent to which the Postal Academies are involved in community affairs.

* To identify the characteristics of the individuals served by the program.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted by staff of the Division of Program Evaluation Studies. The information in the report is based primarily on field visits (during the period September 14 - October 18, 1971) to four of the six cities in which Postal Academies are located. In addition, key national Academy staff were interviewed, and national office data, reports, and other records were analyzed.

In the field work phase, interviews were conducted with local project staff, active students and terminees (over 100 interviewed), and representatives of various community agencies and organizations. Personal data relating to enrollees were obtained from a 25 percent sample of student and terminee files.

MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS

-- The Postal Academies had enrolled a cumulative total of 1,644 students as of the end of the third term in June 1971. There were 809 active students at the end of the term, 11 had completed the program, and 824 had terminated before completion. Of the terminees, 221 had left the program to enter the armed forces, school, or a job.

-- A little more than half of the current enrollees are male. The average enrollee is 18 years old, left school in the tenth grade, functions at the sixth or seventh grade level (by inner-city norms), has been out of school for a year, and is in need of employment. One-third were on welfare and almost as many had police records.

-- The prime, overall objective of the Postal Academy--to educate and motivate disadvantaged school dropouts--appears to be the strongest part of the program and generally is being achieved. The average student entering the program improves his functional ability by about one academic year during the first four months, according to tests conducted by the independent Educational Testing Service. Seventy-four students have passed the GED examination and 79 are now enrolled in colleges and universities.

-- One original program objective, that of upgrading lower-level postal employees, was not achieved and that part of the program has since been abandoned.

-- Some of the specific goals and objectives of the program lack clarity and appear to range from preparing students to pass the GED examination to assisting the student to achieve his own goals and ambitions, whatever they may be. Generally, a student is not counted as a completion until he has passed the GED.

-- The availability of part-time jobs in the local Post Offices has been insufficient to meet the employment needs of the students. Private sector employment and Neighborhood Youth Corps stipends have, in part, made up the deficit.

-- The program generally is deficient in arranging for or providing manpower services (career guidance, occupational training, and job development) which are needed for students not planning to enter college.

-- Postal employees have been utilized successfully as Academy staff through careful selection and a relatively comprehensive training program. Most feel that they have embarked on new careers.

-- Most of the Postal Academies are involved in community affairs through the efforts of both the staff and students. Examples are participation in tutoring projects, anti-drug campaigns, and as officials in community organizations.

-- The cost per student man-year is high ($3,900 excluding stipends), primarily because the program is operating at only 62 percent of planned capacity. In addition, a relatively large (20) national staff accounts for about $400 of the per student man-year cost.

-- The funding mechanism for the program has been highly improvised with few interagency memoranda of understanding; the result has been confusion and lack of agreement on program objectives and performance expectations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following summarizes the major recommendations noted in the report:

-- Based on the accomplishments to date, the Postal Academy merits continued fiscal support. However, the funding relationships should be clarified and formalized with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare being responsible for the basic education component of the program, and the Department of Labor responsible for the manpower and supportive services portions.

-- The Postal Academy program should take immediate steps to reduce cost per student man-year by increasing enrollment to capacity or by scaling down the program size. The functions of the national staff should be reviewed and adjustments made as appropriate.

-- The program should become a more integral part of the community manpower system so that the Academies will have better access to occupational training, job placement, and career guidance services.

-- The objectives and goals of the Postal Academy should be re-defined to enable better measurement (both quantitatively and qualitatively) of program effectiveness.

EVALUATION STUDY OF THE

POSTAL ACADEMY PROGRAM

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background Summary

The Postal Academy program was designed in late 1969 to provide basic education skills and job opportunities for disadvantaged school dropouts, and to give educational help to postal employees who have been unable to qualify for advancement. Postal Academies were established in five cities in May 1970 and in a sixth city later in the year.

The Postal Academies are operated by the U. S. Postal Service with most of the staff having been recruited from among postal employees. The initial funding of the program (FY 1970) was from the Department of Labor, Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Post Office Department. Subsequently, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare replaced the OEO as a funding source.

Currently, there are 17 Academies operating in six major cities (Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Newark, San Francisco, and Washington). They were designed originally for a capacity of 1,680 students and operate now at an approximate annual cost of $3.9 million. Approximately 1,000 students currently are participating in the program.

B. Objectives of the Study

The scope of this evaluation study covers all major functions of the Postal Academy program. The Department of Labor funds are not identified with any particular aspect of the program and separate financial records are not kept according to funding sources. The Department of Labor is, therefore, funding a share of all program components.

The major objectives of the study were:

1. To identify changes in the academic achievement of the students during their enrollment, and their ability and desire to take advantage of further education and training.

2. To assess the effect of the program on the students' employment potential, including their orientation to the employment market and utilization of the local employment and manpower system.

3. To identify the extent to which staff development efforts have contributed to meeting program objectives, provided new careers and upward mobility for postal employees, and increased the supply of education and manpower staff resources.

4. To determine the relationships of the Postal Academies to other programs, agencies, and individuals in the communities in which the Academies are located.

5. To identify the characteristics of the individuals served by the program.

C. Methodology

The information and data contained in this report are based primarily on field visits to four of the six cities in which Postal Academies are operating. The cities of Atlanta, Newark, San Francisco and

Washington were visited during the period of September 14 through October 18. In addition, key national staff were interviewed and national office data, reports, and other records were reviewed.

The field work phase of the study included the following tasks:

1. Postal Academy staff, including all key administrative staff, teachers, and streetworkers, were interviewed. Approximately forty such interviews were conducted.

2. Information was obtained from the individual files of all program graduates and from a 25 percent random sample of active students and early terminees. Personal interviews were conducted with as many active students and terminees in the sample as possible and with several program graduates. A total of 115 such interviews were conducted.

3. Community agencies and organizations which had some relationship with or interest in the Postal Academies were contacted. In all four cities, interviews were conducted with representatives of the Cooperative Area Manpower Planning System (CAMPS), the State Employment Service, the Postal Service, and the public schools. Other organizations contacted included community

action agencies, Neighborhood Youth Corps projects, a probation office, a human rights commission and others. A total of 38 such contacts were made.

The study was conducted by staff of the Office of Planning and Evaluation with overall direction from the Division of Program Evaluation Studies, Abraham Stahler, Chief. It was designed and directed by John R. Elliott with the assistance of Gus Morrison and Jon Jungjohann. Clerical assistance was provided by Mary Melton and Sherry Carpenter.

II. PROGRAM ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVES

A. Origins

The idea for establishing street academies within the U. S. Post Office Department had its origins in two other programs. One was a street academy program in New York City sponsored by the Urban League and various business organizations, and the other was the Post Office summer aide program.

The Urban League program was established to provide a flexible and responsive alternative to public schooling for individuals who had left public school before completion. The street academies were located on urban streets in store front type facilities and reportedly have been successful in moving disadvantaged school dropouts through a high school equivalency and, for many, on to college.

The other program instrumental in creating the idea for the Postal Academy program was the Post Office summer aide program. This effort provided summer employment for disadvantaged youth, with postal employees successfully utilized as supervisors and counselors. Large numbers of postal employees volunteered to assist as counselors and postal officials were impressed with the response and with the capability and competence displayed by the volunteers in dealing with the aides -- a group not oriented to the work disciplines demanded by postal work.

Familiarity with the Urban League's street academies and the positive experience with the summer aide program provided high level postal officials with the incentive to explore the possibility of the Post Office Department sponsoring and operating its own street academy program. It was felt that such a program would not only provide school dropouts with an education, but could also provide lower-level postal employees with the education necessary for movement upward in the postal system. It also was hoped that a significant number of students would choose postal careers as a result of attending the academies and working part-time in the Postal Service. Another anticipated by-product was the potential opportunity for postal employees to volunteer for assignment as Postal Academy staff and thereby develop new skills and interest in the social service and education fields (see Attachment A).

The Postmaster General enlisted the support of the Secretary of Labor and the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, and with funds from all three agencies the Postal Academy program was launched in the first half of calendar year 1970. In fiscal year 1971, the OEO was replaced by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare as a funding source.

The Postal Academy program was instituted in six cities and, from the outset, was regarded as an experiment by the Post Office Department and the other funding agencies. Because of its experimental nature and the fact that the program did not fit into normal agency funding patterns, many of the funding arrangements were informally made at high levels. Consequently, agreements relating to program objectives and goals were sometimes inconsistent and, in one case, funds appear to have moved from one agency to another with no formal agreement whatsoever.

The Postal Academy program is currently operating at an annual funding level of approximately $3.9 million. Of this amount, about 55% is provided by the Department of HEW, 35% by the Department of Labor, and 10% by the U. S. Postal Service. Since half or more of the HEW commitment is MDTA money, approximately 63% of the funds originate in the Department of Labor's Manpower Administration. A breakdown of the Postal Academy funding by agency source and fiscal year is included as Attachment B and a line item budget as Attachment C. A more detailed presentation of program costs may be found in Section VII.

B. Program Objectives

The primary objective of the Postal Academy program was noted in its first term report:

> "The Postal Academy program is an attempt to motivate and train hard core dropout youth to obtain a high school equivalency diploma and become productive citizens. It does this by establishing small store-front schools and by staffing these storefront academies with postal employees who serve as teachers and streetworkers (counselors)."

An early description of the program included the following as an objective:

> "To provide upward mobility into colleges, business and government for educationally disadvantaged youth and underemployed postal workers through educational units utilizing Postal Service resources."

During the evaluation study, various Postal Academy staff members were asked to state the general objectives of the program; the following are representative statements:

- To develop meaningful citizens.
- To instill self-confidence.
- To improve employability by improving the person.
- To enable the student to determine his own goals and life objectives.
- To help the students grow and become assets to the community.
- To motivate the student to continue his education and training.

More specific goals in terms of input and output of students were developed early in the program. With the program fully staffed and operating at capacity, it was anticipated that 1,620

new students would be enrolled in entry level Street Academies during a year. Assuming a 33% dropout rate during the initial period in the Street Academies, 1,080 would be moved to the more advanced Academies of Transition where they would be joined by 782 lower grade postal employees enrolled for the purpose of enabling them to pass examinations for higher level positions. Accounting for some dropouts at the Academy of Transition, the annual output would be 1,746 graduates (720 postal employees and 1,026 individuals from the Street Academies).

In addition to the above numerical objectives, goals were set relating to the expenditure of Public Service Careers (PSC) funds obtained through the Civil Service Commission and for funds obtained from DHEW. The numerical goals contained in the agency agreements differed somewhat from each other as well as from the goals stated in the preceding paragraph. These differences were apparently due to the need to measure output in different ways for different funding programs.

The agreement between the Postal Academy program and the Civil Service Commission for the utilization of PSC funds in FY 1971 emphasized the movement of Academy students into postal careers and the upgrading of postal employees. It was estimated that approximately one-third of the Academy students would choose full

time careers with the Postal Service. The agreement also stated that 680 postal employees would enroll in the upgrading component. The Civil Service Commission provided $500,000 of PSC funds in FY 1971 to achieve these goals. The remainder of the $1.2 million Department of Labor commitment was transferred directly from the Department to the Postal Service with no formal agreement between the two agencies.

The DHEW agreement stated that "the Postal Academy shall complete training for and graduate not less than 2,100 dropouts by the end of June 1971. The Academy shall also complete training for an additional 720 lower-level employees for higher paying jobs."

The objectives and goals of the Postal Academy program for FY 1972 have not been formally defined between the program and the funding agencies. Agreements have not been developed but some significant changes in program objectives have taken place. The upgrading component of the program has been deleted (see Section IV.C. for discussion) and experience has shown that only a few Academy students can be expected to enter postal careers. The PSC aspect of the program is therefore greatly diminished and the Civil Service Commission is no longer involved in the funding process. The general objective and philosophy of the program relating to education and services to young school dropouts remains relatively

unchanged. The emphasis continues to be on providing general education leading to a high school equivalency, with strong encouragement for graduates to enroll in a college or university.

III. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A. The Organization

The Postal Academy program consists of a national office and six city projects. Each city project consists of two entry level Street Academies and one Academy of Transition (with the exception of Newark which has only one Street Academy). New students enter the program by enrolling in either of the two Street Academies which are designed to motivate the new students and to raise their academic performance to about the eighth grade level. After a period of four months or more, the Street Academy students graduate to the Academy of Transition where the academic content is more advanced. One of the major individual milestones of this Academy is the passing of the GED examination. Students may remain at the Academy of Transition for up to one year or more (see Attachment D).

The organization of personnel in the Academies in each city varies somewhat depending on the preference of the individual Director-Trainers and the strengths and weaknesses of the staffs. Each of the four cities visited had a Director-Trainer as the top administrator and a Project Director as a deputy. Two cities had a Head Streetworker and a Head Teacher to whom the remaining staff reported. One city had a Department Head for each of the

four academic departments and the Director-Trainer served as head streetworker. The fourth had an Educational Coordinator at the administrative level and a Headmaster to manage and supervise each of the three Academies.

Although the various organizational approaches taken in the four cities were appropriate for achieving the original objectives, some changes may be required to meet the students' manpower needs. It may be necessary to develop more specialized manpower staff as some Academies are now beginning to do.

The national office has, in the past, played a vital role in providing leadership, technical assistance, training, and central administrative services. At the beginning, strong central administration and control was needed to implement the program and the national staff appears to have performed its functions reasonably well. With more experienced managerial and technical staff at the project level, many of the functions of the national office have been decentralized. The national office and the Postal Academy Training Institute have been merged, reorganized, and reduced in number of personnel. However, a staff of about 20 still remains in the national office and it is difficult to justify this large a staff for the current operating workload.

Interviews with project personnel in the cities and consideration of the reduced role of the national office would indicate that the national staff could be reduced significantly without damaging the program. The cost of maintaining the national staff amounts to about $230 per student man-year (based on full program capacity--almost $400 based on actual enrollment). These figures are high for a program that already operates at a relatively high unit cost compared to other manpower and educational programs (see Section VII).

B. Staffing and Staff Development

One of the original concepts of the Postal Academy program was that many postal employees were willing and able to motivate and help school dropouts to continue their education in a street academy setting. There is no question that they were willing. When the first 54 Postal Academy positions were announced, 1,500 employees submitted applications even though the positions did not represent an increase in pay for most applicants.

A large proportion of the Postal Service applicants had some experience in various educational and social service fields, primarily as volunteers. Such individuals received preference for the Postal Academy positions and a relatively comprehensive training program was developed to provide the necessary theore-

tical and technical background for educating and serving disadvantaged youth. When teachers and streetworkers in the four cities visited were asked how they learned to do their job, most stated that the formal training they had received was the most important aspect of their preparation.

The planning for staff selection, training, and development was quite comprehensive, including stress-endurance training in New Mexico prior to the selection of the top staff. During the first 18 months of the program (FY 1970 and FY 1971), about eight percent of the Postal Academy budget was spent on staff development. This relatively large proportion of funds devoted to staff development appears to have been well worthwhile, particularly since most of the staff (75 percent in the cities visited) came to the Postal Academy from the Postal Service with limited formal experience in education and social service work. The current quality of the staff is high, especially in its ability to relate to and motivate the students, and in its devotion and committment to the Academy objectives. There is some feeling among program leaders, however, that staff hired in the future should have more academic qualifications and experience.

The amount of formal education of the Academy staff varies considerably. Formal education was not a significant factor

in selecting the staff and the result is that only about one-third of the staff in the four cities visited have college degrees. The largest group -- 46 percent -- were those who had attended some college but had not completed the degree requirements. Twenty percent were high school graduates and two percent had not completed high school. Thus, the Postal Academy program has offered a career opportunity to postal employees who probably would have experienced considerable difficulty in starting such careers without a college degree. Virtually all of the staff interviewed stated that they were embarked on new careers and are pleased with the contribution they are able to make in the Academy.

An examination of the ratios of staff to students reveals a situation of concern. The staffing model upon which the Postal Academy program was built calls for the Academies in each city to have a capacity of 280 students. To serve these students, there would be 22 teachers, 10 street workers, and an administrative staff. This would provide one teacher for about every 13 students and one streetworker for every 28 students. The ratio of teachers and streetworkers combined would be one to every 8.7 students. These ratios are very

favorable compared to other manpower and education programs but probably can be justified considering the need of the students for individual attention. In fact, the students interviewed placed great value on the time that these ratios allowed the staff to spend on individual problems (see Section IV B.).

The concern with staff-student ratios is not so much with the model as with the actual experience. Enrollment levels have not kept pace with plans and in the four cities visited, the ratio of teachers and streetworkers to enrollees was one to 6.6 (this does not include unofficial students who may be active in the program). The ratio of teachers alone to enrollees was one to 10.6 and of teachers to students in attendance on an average day, one to 7.4. While these ratios are beneficial to students attending classes, they result in very high unit costs (see Section VII).

C. Management Information

The Postal Academy program contracted with a management consultant firm to develop a management information system. The system served the program well for numerical data on active students but its utility is limited regarding the status of individuals, either

dropping out of or completing the program. The national office and the individual projects have recognized its limitations and a revision of the system is currently being considered.

Some of the weaknesses of the management information system are:

1. Lack of information in student files concerning the student's progress in the Academy. Although grades are not given in the Academies, there are other indicators of progress that should become a part of the student file. For example, the evaluation team experienced difficulty in locating test scores because they usually were not in the student's files. Much information relative to student performance is located with individual staff members rather than in a central location (see Section IV. B.2.).

2. Lack of reporting on unofficial or reserve students. Each of the four projects visited held some students in an unofficial status, yet such students may be attending classes and receiving all of the services of the program. This may be a significant workload that is not measured.

3. Lack of specific information on the reasons why students leave the Academy. The system records why the student left such as "to get a job," but it does not record whether or not he got one, the Academy's role in finding him one, or if the student said only that he was planning to get one.

4. Lack of information on follow-up contacts made with Academy terminees (dropouts). The Academy staff often has current information on a terminee's status but it is not recorded and the files leave the impression that contact with the terminee has been lost when in fact there may be a continuing relationship.

It is recommended that the management information system be reviewed and re-designed to provide adequate information on student progress, the status and follow-up of terminees and graduates, and the existence and participation of unofficial students.

IV. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

A. The Students

1. Recruitment and Selection

The Postal Academy program had enrolled a total of 1,644 students as of the end of the third term in June 1971 (see Attachment E). Of these enrollees, 809 were still active students at the end of the term, 11 had completed the program, and 824 had terminated before completion. Of the 824 early terminees, 221 were reported to have left the program to enter the armed forces, school, or a job.

Although only 11 students had completed the program, 64 had passed the General Educational Development (GED) examination for their high school equivalency.* All presumably were not listed as completions because most were still enrolled in the program pending placement in college, jobs, or training.

Forty-one percent of the third term students had part-time jobs. Most of the jobs were in local Post Offices; the remainder were primarily in the private sector (see Attachment F).

The Postal Academy program was designed to provide remedial education to inner-city, disadvantaged, school dropouts. One of the features of the program was its potential to reach and recruit such inner-city youth. This potential existed

* As of October 1971, 74 has passed the GED.

primarily because the program was to be staffed largely by postal employees, many of whom walk the streets, knock on many doors, are known, trusted, and respected by most individuals in the inner-city area, and can speak the language of the disadvantaged.

Consistent with the "street academy" approach after which the Postal Academy program is patterned, recruitment is essentially through streetworkers who go into the community and recruit potential Academy students directly off the street. Enrollment figures for the entry level Street Academies indicate that this technique has been quite successful. It should be noted that only the enrollment levels of the entrance level Academies are meaningful in respect to recruitment since all students, except the few whose reading scores are relatively high, must come into the program at this point. The enrollment levels at the Academies of Transition depend essentially on the retention rate because their students come from the Street Academies.

Although the streetworker approach has been the basic recruiting technique of the Postal Academy program, almost 60 percent of the sample students interviewed in the four cities learned of the program by word of mouth--close to 50 percent indicated

that they learned of the program through a friend. Only 19 percent of the students stated that they learned of the program through streetworkers. These results may suggest that the streetworker approach has been effective, not only for direct recruiting, but in making the program well-known and respected within the communities served. Another significant source of Academy students (15%) was referral from other programs and agencies.

A factor which undoubtedly aided in recruiting students during the earlier stage of the program was its offer of part-time employment. However, when jobs with the Post Office failed to materialize and local economic conditions worsened, the offer of employment could not be utilized as a factor in recruitment. The Postal Academy program does not provide a stipend for its students, although most of the Academies have been able to obtain NYC stipends for some students. Although recruitment has not been seriously affected by this limited ability of the Postal Academy to provide students with financial support, it is apparent that its retention rate is adversely affected by this deficiency. One of the most frequently made suggestions by the dropouts contacted, as well as the students who were interviewed, was the need for stipends or more part-time jobs.

Beyond the basic requirements that a dropout be 16-21 years of age, not addicted to narcotics, and have parent or guardian permission if under 18, admission is essentially on an open door basis. An elementary screening procedure generally used by the Academies requires that entering students be held in an "unofficial" status for a period of from one to three weeks, during which they receive orientation and are required to demonstrate their interest in the program. In the cities visited, interest was generally determined on the basis of their attendance. The Postal Academy's national staff recently concluded, however, that its open door policy has presented serious problems, and that some basic changes are needed in the the Academy's screening and recruitment procedures. Following are excerpts from the steering committee report (July 30, 1971) in which such changes are set forth:

"Our present open enrollment policy has thrust upon our local teachers an impossible task. Not only do they have to teach students from different academic levels but also different motivational levels. In an attempt both to lessen the burdens on our teachers and to improve our dropout rate, we are recommending the following procedure for enrollment of new students.

"All new students meet with a teacher, a streetworker, and an administrator to explain the nature of the program. Such a meeting becomes the vehicle for not only determining the student's needs but also his readiness. The meeting should point out what PAP is about, what PAP is not about (GED), and what will be

expected of the student. No promises (i.e., a job) should be made and the nature of our educational offerings should be made clear (February goal). Such a meeting should afford a student a chance to determine if he wants the kind of experience we hope to give. Other real alternatives should also be offered to the student. Such alternatives might include full time employment or other training opportunities outside of the program.

"The meeting should not be interpreted solely as a screening device to rule out unmotivated students. Rather if a student understands the nature of our educational offering and he decides to come, then he has in effect screened PAP and has said that he wants what we offer. This voting with his feet becomes the criteria of his motivational readiness."

2. Student Characteristics

Information on the personal characteristics of students was obtained from the files of a 25 percent sample of students who have enrolled in the program in the four cities. One specific problem surrounds the use of the data. In two of the cities visited, several items on the Personal Information Form were not completed for a large portion of the sample students. Consequently, the figures cited below represent only the proportion of students for whom information on the specific characteristic was available. The figures, therefore, are very general approximations and should be interpreted with caution (see Attachment G).

Of the four projects visited, the average student was slightly over 18 years of age at the time he entered the Academy program. With one exception, there was very little difference among

the four projects in the age distribution of the sample students. For one of the projects, however, the average age was slightly higher than the other. This may have been influenced to some extent by the State's mandatory school attendance law under which students were not eligible to attend public school beyond age 18, except to finish a school year. In fact, several of the students interviewed said they left high school because they were too old or getting too old. For terminees, the average age was slightly higher than that of active students.

More than half (53%) of the enrollees in the sample were male. Data obtained from the Postal Academy's national office on student enrollment during two of the prior three terms of the program show even higher proportions of male students. Males made up 60 percent of the students during the first term and 58 percent during the third. Almost two-thirds of the sample terminees were male.

The average enrollee in the sample had dropped out of public school during the 10th grade. However, almost a third of the students had reached the 11th grade and approximately 12 percent were in the 12th grade when they dropped out.

Slightly more than a third of the sample students indicated that they or their family were on welfare. Females were predominant among this group. For terminees, the proportion on welfare was slightly smaller. This is consistent with the fact that fewer females were among the terminees. Approximately 29 percent of the enrollees in the sample had police records. More than one-third of the terminees fell in this category.

A basic tenet of the Academy's streetworker philosophy is that students' survival needs must be dealt with before they can be expected to give serious pursuit to an education. A section on the enrollment form identifies students' needs at the time they enter the program. More than half of the enrollees in the sample were in need of employment, and over a third needed assistance in obtaining such things as medical and dental care, day care, housing and clothing.

In summary, the typical Academy enrollee is an 18 year old male with approximately a 10th grade education (but functioning below that level), and in need of employment. He had been out of school, on the average, for slightly over a year at the time he enrolled in the Academy program.

3. Motivation, Goals and Aspirations

If there is any one observation that graphically stands out after observing and talking with a number of students at the various Academy projects, it is the "air of exuberance" at these store-front schools. There seems to be real pride, hope, positive attitudes, feelings of accomplishment, and the kind of aspirations that one would hardly expect to find among a group of inner-city school dropouts (i.e., based on the common characterization of dropouts as problem students, slow learners, unmotivated, frivolous, etc.)

A look at some of the reasons why students in the Academy programs dropped out of public school, however, quickly reveals that these are not unusual dropouts (see Attachment H). The majority left public school because of conflict with teachers, loss of interest, poor progress, and pregnancy. A psychologist for the public school system in one of the sample cities visited described them as students who left public school with chips on their shoulders, with animosity, hatred and bitterness, and whose total experience with the public school system had been negative but who are now seriously involved in getting an education. It is interesting to note that the students showed hardly any signs, during the individual interviews (or as a group in the classrooms) of

such hostility, bitterness, and hatred. However, comments made by many of them during the interviews clearly suggested that their attitude and outlook on life had changed substantially since coming to the Academy. One of the most frequent comments of the students was that the Academy had "gotten them together". Their cooperativeness, openness, and ability to express themselves during the interviews partially reflected the significant attitudinal and behavioral changes that have been taking place.

When asked what they plan to do after completing the Academy program, almost three-fourths of the students who were interviewed stated that they either plan to attend college (40 percent) or enroll in a vocational or skill training program. At the same time, there were instances where students seemed to have had unrealistic expectations about their future and appeared to need stronger professional guidance and counseling.

Overall, the students in the sample projects appeared well motivated, serious about completing their education, and to have had fairly clear ideas about what they wanted to do in life.

B. Education Program

1. Curriculum

The Postal Academies visited had basic curricula covering four subject areas: (a) reading and English, (b) mathematics, (c) social studies and (d) science. Black history was taught in all Academies and was either an elective or part of social science.

The Academies had elective subjects to the extent that there was interest, time, space, and staff. Examples of electives are photography, art, typing, drama, modern dance, piano, and karate.

One area which generally was handled informally was what might be called "orientation to the world of work." This was considered by most staff to be part of social studies and some social studies teachers said that they covered it. However, it did not appear to be written into the curriculum of the Academies visited. To some extent, streetworkers handle this subject area on an ad hoc basis by briefing students on how to find and get a job. It is the streetworkers who usually refer students to the jobs and they have a personal interest in orienting students to the work world. In one project, the streetworker who functions as the job developer covers

"career development" whenever he serves as a substitute teacher which is quite often.

It is recommended that some work-related material be included in the curriculum. It should not be limited to "how to find a job," but should broadly cover the "function of work in society" as part of the social studies curriculum.

2. Student Progress

a. Academic Achievement - The Postal Academies do not maintain student grades in the traditional manner. However, some measures of student progress were available, the most definitive being scores from the testing program conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) under contract to the Postal Service. The Academy students are tested at the beginning and ending of each term. Technically, a term is a four-month period, but the time between tests is closer to three months. The tests cover the subject areas of reading, English and mathematics.

The test results indicate that the average Academy student, upon entry into the program, is functioning at the upper 6th grade to lower 7th grade level compared to inner-city

school norms. It is significant that the functional level range is very broad--from about the 3rd grade level to the 11th or 12th grade level.

The increases in functional grade level that took place in the entry level Street Academies during the first two terms were almost identical; the average student in each term increased his scores by one grade level. The more advanced Academies of Transition, which opened during the second term, experienced an average grade increase of about one-third of a year.

There were declines in the test score gains during the third term. The average Street Academy student gained about three-fourths of a year and the average Transition Academy student experienced only a slight, almost unmeasurable gain. There is some speculation as to why the test score gains decreased during the third term. One possibility is that the third term students initially tested somewhat higher than those of the two previous terms and, based on the Transition Academy scores, the program does not do as well with students functioning at higher academic levels. Another possibility is that program staff may have settled into a routine and relaxed their efforts during the third term.

In summary, the ETS testing program indicates that, on the average, academic gains are being made. Even during the third term, when the gains were smaller, the average Street Academy student still increased his performance significantly more than the average inner-city school student would be expected to do during the same period of time.

b. High School Equivalency - Another measure of student progress is the number of student's who obtain their high school equivalency by passing the GED test. Sixty-four students had passed the GED by the end of the third term in June 1971--approximately another ten between June and October. The number passing the GED should increase significantly in the future as more students have spent a year or more in the program.

One city project found a high correlation between reading levels and GED scores. It was found that a reading level of 9.4 years was generally required to pass the GED. Based on the ETS test results, it would take the average Academy student 14 to 18 months to reach a reading level sufficiently high to pass the GED. It was found in the cities visited that the students who had passed the GED were

generally those who were above average in reading ability upon entering the Academy.

c. Other measures - The staff in the Academies visited were asked how they measured student progress. Some of the measures mentioned were class attendance record, class participation, self-discipline, development of personal goals, participation in extracurricular activities, and tests and quizzes given in class. Some attempts have been made to develop a point system for measuring such elements, but little evidence was found in the student files that such information is recorded.

It is recommended that uniform criteria be established for measuring student progress and that consistent quantitative and non-quantitative measures be adopted.

3. Student Reactions to Program

One of the objectives of interviewing the Academy students was to obtain from them a personal assessment of the educational phase of the program. Each student interviewed was asked how the Academy differed from the public school he had left. Forty-two percent stated that the Academy teachers were more helpful and another 27 percent said that they learned more in the Academy primarily because of better

teachers and better teaching methods. Thus, almost 70 percent of the students interviewed listed better teachers and teaching methods as the primary difference between the Academy and the public schools. Most of the remaining students cited a less restrictive atmosphere as the main difference. Following are some typical student reactions to the Academy:

- You can ask the teachers questions and they will help you. In public school they didn't have time.
- In public school, we were pushed from one grade to another to make room for new students; here the teachers work with you until you get it.
- I had friends in the Postal Academy and they were learning more than I was in high school.
- The Academy teachers understand the younger generation.
- I couldn't understand math in school but it is my favorite subject here.
- They allow you to smoke in class. I can't think well unless I smoke.

It was apparent that many students had developed strong ties to the Academy and, to some extent, had become dependent upon it. They frequently referred to the relationships and atmosphere of the Academy as that of one big family, and praised the patience and understanding shown by the staff -- often contrasting it with that of teachers in public school.

Academy terminees were also contacted and asked for their reaction to the program. Their replies were very similar to those of the active students. They had usually left the program to get a job or for some personal reason rather than because of any complaint about the academic program.

4. Public School Reactions

The public school system was contacted in each of the four cities visited during the study. Representatives with personal knowledge of the Academy program were interviewed in three cities while no one familiar with the Academy was located in the fourth. In one city, the school representative stated that the Postal Academy is one of the best programs for dropouts that he has seen. He personally contacted potential candidates for the Academy and he estimated that about 50 percent of those he referred actually enrolled.

In another city, the school representative referred to the Academy as the best basic education program available in the city. He said that students who failed in the public schools seemed to succeed in the Academy.

5. Summary

The education component appears to be accomplishing its

objectives although there is concern about the decrease in academic gain during the third term. Specific attention should be directed toward increasing academic gain in the Academies of Transition. The academic program is given high marks by its active students as well as by terminees. Representatives of school systems contacted were favorably impressed with the Academy and its progress to date.

C. Upgrading of Postal Employees

One of the key elements in the original concept of a Postal Academy program was that it would be a vehicle for upgrading lower-level postal employees. The plan was to provide sufficient basic education to such employees to enable them to pass examinations for higher level positions. Such education was to have been provided for 720 employees per year.

This component of the Postal Academy program has experienced great difficulty and has now been abandoned. It was actually conducted in only two cities during the early part of calendar year 1971 and the results were poor. In one city, 40 employees started in the component, 16 completed and took the level 5 examination, and only 2 passed. In the other city, 25 expressed interest, 8 reported to class, 4 attended regularly, and only 3 passed the level 5 examination. An attempt was made to organize a class in a third city but it did not start because of a lack

of interested students. Upgrading classes in the Postal Academies were not even attempted in the other three cities; however, the Post Office itself conducted upgrading classes in at least one of the three.

Among the reasons for the failure of the upgrading component were the following:

1. Lack of postmaster support. It was reported that local postmasters were not enthusiastic about the Postal Academy program and did not want their employees enrolled in it. Academy staff reported that the upgrading component was not well advertised and employees were not encouraged to enroll.

2. Lack of interest among low-level employees. Local Post Office personnel interviewed report that lower-level employees generally are not interested in attending classes for upgrading. One city Post Office attempted an upgrading program before the Postal Academy and had only one employee express interest. One reason for the lack of interest was the fact that the employees were required to attend classes on their own time rather than during work hours.

3. Lack of interest among local Postal Academy staff. The local Academy staffs seemed to be mainly interested in working with young school dropouts and many appeared to regard the upgrading component as a diversion from their prime interest.

D. Manpower Services

1. Academy Staffing

The original staffing pattern of the Postal Academy program did not include any positions devoted full time to meeting the manpower services needs of the students. The emphasis was on education and, to a large extent, the Postal Service was expected to supply enough part-time jobs and full-time careers to satisfy the needs of the students. The streetworkers were expected to provide the additional job development, job placement, vocational counseling, and occupational training services needed by their respective students.

Early, it was discovered that more effort would have to be devoted to manpower services, primarily because the Postal Service did not provide the quantity or type of part-time jobs required by the program and that most students were not interested in postal careers. Each city project has developed its own system for dealing with the need for manpower services. Each of the four projects visited had one streetworker designated to coordinate manpower matters. Their duties varied from finding part-time jobs for students to assisting students in planning their careers. The national office is encouraging and assisting the local projects to become more involved and sophisticated in the area of manpower and career development.

2. Relationship to Local Manpower Systems

The secretariat of the Cooperative Area Manpower Planning System (CAMPS) was contacted in each of the four cities visited. All were aware of the local Postal Academies and knew that they received Department of Labor funds, but none were very familiar with the program's operations. The Academy program was perfunctorily included in the CAMPS plan in two of the cities visited and was an inactive member of the CAMPS committee in one of these two. In the other two cities, the Academies were neither members of the CAMPS committees nor included in the plan.

The Academies in each of the four cities visited had various ad hoc links with different parts of the manpower system. All had some relationship with the Neighborhood Youth Corps (NYC). Two of the projects utilized the State Employment Service for obtaining some manpower services such as occupational training and job vacancy lists (Job Bank). In one city, the street-worker/job developer had received training from the Employment Service in how to use the Job Bank and had made arrangements for training in the interpretation of General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB) results. He plans to have the GATB administered by the Employment Service to all of the Academy students.

3. Part-Time Employment

The need for part-time employment among the students is significant. Many of them left public school to obtain a job. Upon entry into the Postal Academy, about 60 percent of the students express a need for immediate employment. Many of the students who drop out of the Academy do so to get a job.

The Postal Academies originally anticipated that 80 percent of the students would be employed part-time in the local Post Offices. It was estimated that such a figure would provide jobs for all the students desiring jobs. In the beginning of the program when enrollment levels were low, the percentage of students employed part-time approached the 80 percent figure. However, as enrollment grew the number of available Post Office jobs declined, primarily due to general cutbacks in Post Office employment levels. By the third term, only 36 percent of enrolled students were employed in the Post Office (see Attachment F) and in the four cities visited only 19 percent of the students were employed in the Post Office. An additional 12 percent were employed part-time in other jobs resulting in almost one-third of the students holding some type of job.

The part-time postal jobs were to provide more than just income for students. The jobs were to have been part of the educational process, with increased work responsibility and increased pay corresponding to improved academic achievement. The student was to develop work habits and skills, and to see the relationship between education and employment opportunity. Also, for students interested in postal careers, the part-time jobs would give them experience and familiarization with postal work before actually embarking on a career.

In addition to the fact that the number of postal jobs was insufficient, the nature of the jobs was such that it transmitted a negative view of postal work to the students. In only one of the four cities visited were students working in regular mail handling operations. In two cities, they were doing janitorial or custodial work, and in another they worked in a truck terminal located ten miles away in another city. These jobs are considered by the students as being undesirable as a work experience and useful only for the money earned.

The local Post Offices stated that they were providing all the part-time jobs that they could because of the tight employment

ceilings with which they must comply under the reorganized Postal Service. In the city with the smallest number of postal jobs, the postal employment level has reportedly dropped by 400 employees (11 percent) during the last two years. Concerning the nature of the jobs, the two cities with custodial work reported that they had vacancies for this type of work but not for mail handling or clerk jobs.

The lack of a sufficient number of postal jobs has caused the Academies to search for other part-time employment opportunities for the students. With the slowdown of the economy, such jobs are very difficult to locate for young, inexperienced students. For the most part, the jobs that are located are with retail establishments and restaurants.

4. Neighborhood Youth Corps

The lack of a sufficient number of part-time jobs for Academy students led the staff to look for other types of support for students in need of some type of income. Several Academy projects contacted local NYC-2 projects to discuss obtaining stipends for Academy students. The NYC-2 projects were agreeable and as of the end of October, 247 students (23 percent of enrollment) were drawing NYC stipends. One of the projects visited had almost half of its students on stipends.

To draw the stipends, the students must be in attendance at the Academy for at least 30 hours per week but they do not have to perform work unless the local projects require it. To be eligible, Academy students must be disadvantaged, unemployed, a school dropout, and 16 or 17 years old. A few (not more than 10 percent) 18 and 19 year old students may be allowed.

Most Postal Academy staff were not enthusiastic about large numbers of students drawing stipends, but they deemed it necessary because of the lack of part-time jobs. Academy staff would prefer more substantive jobs because they see the work experience as part of the process of student maturation and growth toward independence. The NYC stipends are viewed as a type of welfare and they want to avoid attracting students who enroll for the stipend. The problem could be overcome if the Academy students on stipends were required to do some type of work to "earn" their stipends. Since the Academies strive to become involved in the community (see Section VI), it would be consistent with Academy objectives to develop part-time public service jobs in the community for the students. Work projects could be developed by the Academies in areas such as tutoring, anti-drug campaigns, dissemination of information on sickle cell anemia, etc.

It is recommended that the Postal Academy work with national and local manpower officials to develop appropriate public service jobs and projects to be staffed by students drawing NYC stipends.

Officials of the NYC-2 projects in the cities visited regard the Postal Academy as a good program and have been quite willing to provide stipends to as many students as their budgets allow. The goals of the Postal Academy are very similar to the goals of NYC-2 -- both seek to provide a high school education as a first priority. Of course, another attraction of the Postal Academy program for the NYC-2 projects is that it represents low-cost slots because NYC does not have to pay the educational costs. Also, the Academy slots require very little NYC staff time because the students have already been recruited and selected by the Academy and are supervised by the Academy as well.

5. Occupational Training

With the Postal Academy's emphasis on entering college, the development of non-college education and training opportunities has not been as actively pursued as the need seems to warrant. Colleges and universities are canvassed, scholarships are obtained, and students are strongly encouraged to enter college, but very little information is available to students concerning occupational training.

In the four cities visited, there have been 42 program graduates. None of these graduates had entered any type of occupational training program although some of the 18 who are not in college and are employed may be in on-the-job training situations. Of the 29 early terminees interviewed, three were in some type of training program.

There is a general consensus among the Postal Academy staff that there is a need for more occupational training for students who are not college bound. Many of the early terminees might be retained or positively referred if occupational training were available.

Academy staff indicated that if a student expressed an interest in occupational training, the streetworker would attempt to develop an opportunity. However, the study team found little evidence of such activity.

Some academy staff expressed an interest in adding some occupational training to the Academy curriculum. Others felt that it would be better for the Academy to restrict itself to basic education and obtain occupational training elsewhere. Some Academies have obtained surplus typewriters and offer typing and office skills as an elective and one Academy would

like to obtain additional funds for a business occupational training program.

Three of the cities visited indicated that they were exploring the development of a cooperative relationship with the Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC). The OIC's and the Postal Academies have similar self-help philosophies and such an alliance should be mutually beneficial.

It is recommended that the Postal Academies aggressively seek occupational training opportunities through participation in CAMPS and by developing cooperative relationships with occupational training programs in the area.

It is recommended that a portion of Postal Academy funds be reserved to purchase occupational training slots when it cannot be obtained through cooperative arrangements.

6. Job Placement

The development of part-time jobs for students and full-time jobs for early terminees and graduates is a function of the streetworkers. Usually there is one streetworker who coordinates the job finding efforts but there is a lack of systematic and planned job development. The job development that takes place is generally conducted independent of the job finding capability of the manpower system, i.e., the Employment Service, Job Bank, Concentrated Employment Program, etc. It should be noted that some Academy staff reported a lack

of success in utilizing these services. They stated that the ES and CEP had difficulty placing their own clients and that better success could be achieved by the Academy doing its own job development.

It is difficult to determine the level of Postal Academy job development activity. No statistics are kept on job development contacts or job placements. At most, the student Change of Status form might indicate that a particular student left the Academy to go to work for a certain employer, but there is generally no indication as to whether or not the Academy staff assisted in making the placement. It is not known how many of the more than 800 students who have left the program were actually placed in jobs by the Academy.

It is recommended that records be kept of all job placements made by the program staff including information on periodic follow-up activity.

It is recommended that the Postal Academy program design a job development plan with sufficient staff resources devoted to this activity and that maximum use be made of other publicly-supported job development and placement elements such as the Employment Service, Job Bank, NAB/JOBS, and CEP.

7. Career Guidance

An important objective of the Postal Academy educational process is to help the student determine his goals in life

and his own career objectives. In interviewing students, the evaluation team detected that many were beginning to crystalize their ideas of their role in society or, in their own words, "getting myself together." However, the extent and depth of career guidance and counseling available to the students appears to be rather limited. In too many cases, it seems to amount to little more than strong encouragement to go to college, and it appeared that a number had made this choice because "it was the thing to do" or it was what they were expected to say, rather than it being a career choice based on careful assessments of the various alternatives.

The Postal Academy program is aware of the need to improve its career development component. The national office has made some career guidance materials available to the projects and some technical assistance is being given in this area. More needs to be done and an extension of the Manpower Administration's "employability development plan" concept may be helpful.

This concept could be adapted for use by the Postal Academy program where it might be called an Individual Career Development Plan. The plans would be very flexible and would be updated periodically to incorporate new information as the student matures and becomes more specific in his goals. The

plans would reflect a broad variety of objectives depending on each students' abilities, aptitudes, desires, and motivation. Changes that take place in the plans would provide a measure of the Academy's influence on the student's career goals. For example, one of the Academy students who is now in college had an initial goal of becoming a cook. As a result of the Academy's influence, he raised his goal within the same field of interest and is now studying hotel and restaurant management in a junior college. This change in goals is not now recorded in the Academy's records yet it is a measure of the program's effectiveness.

Under the Career Development Plan concept, a student would be considered a program completion whenever he has completed his plan. For some students, this might require that they attend the Academy for one year or more and pass the GED. For others, it might only require a few months at the Academy, referral to a job or training, and not necessarily the immediate passing of a GED (although the obtaining of the high school equivalency should remain a basic objective for each former dropout).

It is recommended that the Postal Academy seriously consider a Career Development Plan approach to career guidance utilizing the most appropriate techniques, procedures, and materials now available.

V. COMPLETIONS AND TERMINATIONS

A. Completions

1. Definition

There is an apparent inconsistency in what the Postal Academy conceptually considers a successful program completer and its operational criteria of program success. In line with the somewhat fluid and broad goals of the program, Academy literature suggests that several alternative criteria are used to determine when a student has successfully fulfilled the requirements of the program. In general, the Academy staff indicated that a student is considered to have completed the program when he has met his own objective, i.e., entrance in college, in a job of his choice, in vocational or skill training, etc. The staff invariably stressed that the Academy's primary aim is not to prepare students for the General Educational Development (GED) examination, but that the GED is just a credential that may be obtained enroute to the student's broader career-oriented goal.

According to Academy records, however, only those students who gain their GED are classified as graduates. Contrary to the expressed policy of the program, students who were able to enroll in college, get a job of their choice, etc., without obtaining their GED, were not counted as having completed the program. This practice appears to work much

to the disadvantage of the program. For example, Academy figures indicate that 74 students have obtained their GED's, many of whom are not in college; on the other hand, 79 former Academy students were attending college. Also, no official records are kept on the number of students who leave the program for career-potential jobs or other training, but Academy staff indicated that there are several who are successfully pursuing their career goals along this line.

A major effort should be made by the Academy program to bring its criteria of success in harmony with its stated aims. Because of the difficulty of translating the Academy's broad objectives into specific and concrete outcomes, one practical approach would be to adopt the Career Development Plan concept discussed and recommended in the preceding section. Under such a plan, a student will have completed the program when he leaves the Postal Academy to pursue the next stage of his predetermined Career Development Plan--such as college, job training, etc.

2. Status of Graduates

Seventy-nine former Postal Academy students are presently enrolled in college. However, as mentioned earlier, many of these are not statistically counted as graduates because they did not obtain their GED. In addition to the students presently attending college, two of the projects visited have set up college preparatory programs for students who have received their GED, but are waiting to be accepted by a college or until the beginning of a new semester.

The Postal Academy has been very successful in obtaining scholarships for graduates; practically all of the graduates presently in college are on scholarships received through the aid of the program. Also, each of the projects visited had or were in the process of receiving commitments from local universities and colleges for scholarships for future graduates.

The individual responsible for special programs at a junior college where several former Academy students are attending was interviewed. He stated that the Academy students did better academically than students from other programs and was strongly supportive of the Postal Academy program.

Almost half of the graduates of the projects visited (for whom information was available) were employed at the time of the visit. Many of these, however, plan to enter college at the beginning of the next semester and were only working temporarily. There was little information available in the records on the types of jobs obtained by graduates.

As noted earlier, part of the original plan of the Postal Academy program was for the Postal Service to serve as a source of career employment for Academy graduates. However,

in the projects visited, only four graduates were employed with the Postal Service. A major reason for this is that the post offices are not hiring--in two cities employees were being laid off. Post Office personnel directors in the cities visited generally expressed a desire to hire Academy graduates, but pointed out that there was no way they could do so. In general, however, the Postal Academy staff does not seem to be emphasizing career employment with the Postal Service.

B. Early Terminations

The national dropout rate for the Postal Academy program is about 50 percent. The Academy staff is not discouraged by this high loss of students but, instead, feel that the Academy ends up with the students who are interested in what the program has to offer and are serious about completing their education. Data on the dropout rate for the current term were not available, but Academy staff suggested that it is running at a much lower rate than for previous terms. The original Postal Academy plan contemplated a dropout rate of 33 percent for the street academies and only 5 percent for the Academies of Transition--an overall rate of 36 percent. The higher dropout rate of 50 percent accounts, in part, for the lower than capacity enrollment levels.

A large portion of the students who drop out of the Academy do so because of financial need. Of the sample terminees contacted in the four cities visited, about a third said they left the Academy because they needed to work. A little more than a third of the terminees contacted were women--almost all said they left the program because of pregnancy or because they lacked adequate day care.

Only one of the projects visited made any systematic attempt to follow-up terminees. Consequently, there was very little information available on their status. This was true even for those terminees whom the Academy had helped to place in jobs. Individual staff members do make contact with some terminees periodically, but very seldom is there any documentation as to their status.

It is recommended that a more systematic follow-up of terminees and graduates be made periodically, e.g., once every 30 days for three months for early terminees and for a year for graduates.

C. Characteristics of Graduates and Terminees

About two-thirds of both the graduates and terminees in the four cities visited were male. The average graduate was slightly over 19 years of age when he entered the Academy, while the average terminee tended to be almost a year younger. Graduates also tended to have dropped out of school

at a higher level than terminees--but only by about a half grade. Somewhat more of the terminees were on welfare and had police records than graduates (see Attachment I).

The reasons given by these two groups for leaving school show some interesting differences (Attachment H). More than a fourth of the graduates left school to work compared to only 10 percent of the terminees; a substantially larger proportion of the graduates also needed employment at the time they enrolled in the Academy program. This was the most common reason given by graduates for leaving school; terminees, not surprisingly, left most often because of lack of interest. Also, almost twice as many graduates stated they left school because they were not learning.

VI. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The local Postal Academy projects are encouraged to become involved with the communities in which they reside. Part of the educational philosophy is to produce individuals who are aware of community dynamics and who will be service oriented regarding community and civic matters. As one Director-Trainer stated his Academy's general objective, "We want the students to grow and become assets to the community." This service orientation is not surprising because most of the Academy staff had been engaged in community affairs and service work before coming to the Academy.

Two of the projects visited were considered by the national office staff to be two of the best in terms of community involvement. The other two projects visited were involved relatively little outside of their own program; however, one was beginning to develop some community projects. Following are some examples of community involvement by staff and students:

- Use of Postal Academy bus to transport parents and other visitors to training school for youth offenders.
- Assists in the distribution of surplus food by providing manpower and vehicles.
- Sponsors and coaches little league athletic teams.
- Conducts tutoring for 8-12 year old neighborhood children on Saturday mornings.
- Provides income tax advice to neighborhood residents.

- Participation by students on city youth council as members and officers.
- Participation by staff and students on boards of directors of several community agencies and organizations.
- Assists community groups in various campaigns such as war against drugs, prostitution, and sickle cell anemia.

The Postal Academies are assets to their communities. They could be even more of a positive force if students drawing NYC stipends were mobilized to do needed public service work (see section IV. D. 4.).

VII. PROGRAM COSTS AND FUNDING SOURCES

A. Program Costs

The Postal Academy Program is currently operating on an annual budget of about $3.9 million (see Attachment B). Of this amount, 63 percent is for salaries, not unexpected in a program of this type where no stipends or allowances are paid to enrollees. The NYC stipends that students draw originate in local NYC projects and are not part of the Postal Academy budget.

About 10 percent of the total cost of the program is devoted to maintaining the national office staff. As noted earlier, this is a relatively large proportion in a program that has significantly decentralized its operations.

The cost per student can be expressed in several ways. If the program were at its capacity of about 1,600 students, the cost per student man-year would be $2,440. At the present enrollment level of about 1,000, the student man-year cost is $3,900. Students are enrolled in the Academy for an average of 7 months so the cost per student served would be $1,420 if the program were at capacity, and about $2,270 at present enrollment levels.

The cost per student man-year and per student served, if the program were at capacity, are approximately comparable to the budgeted costs of the NYC-2 program, excluding student stipends. NYC-2 is very similar in objectives to the Postal Academy Program and comparing costs of the two programs seems to be a fair comparison. The major difference between the programs is that NYC-2 utilizes a portion of its funds to purchase skill training while the Postal Academy limits its expenditures to education.

The present cost per student man-year of $3,900 is clearly too high. The primary reason this figure is so high is that the Academy is operating at only 62 percent of capacity. Original plans were to reach capacity by October 1971 but the program has fallen considerably short of its goal. One reason that enrollment levels have not reached expectations is that one city opened its first Academy 6 months after the others and never has opened its second Street Academy. However, even when this city is excluded, the remaining cities are operating at only 66 percent of capacity.

Another area in which cost probably could be reduced without program damage is to reduce the size of the national staff. With the decentralization that has taken place, it is difficult to justify a national staff that utilizes 10 percent of the budget and almost 12 percent of the salary budget.

It is recommended that immediate steps be taken to reduce cost per student man-year by increasing enrollment to capacity or by scaling down the program size. It is also recommended that the functions of the national staff be reviewed and adjustments made as appropriate.

B. Funding Sources

The funding mechanism for the Postal Academy program has been highly improvised and informal. In some instances, there have not even been written agreements between the Academy and its funding sources. The result of such funding procedures has been confusion and a lack of agreement as to what the objectives of the program are and what the program is expected to achieve. There also has been a significant lack of monitoring by the funding agencies. The only routine reporting required of the Postal Academy are the reports required by the Civil Service Commission for Plan D Public Service Careers projects. These reports are not applicable to the Academy program because it no longer contains any PSC elements.

There is a need for a more orderly and mutually agreeable funding process for the Postal Academy program. Each funding agency should understand what aspect of the Academy program it is funding, and the Academy should understand what level of performance is required to satisfy the funding agency.

In order to clarify the funding relationships, the following recommendation is made:

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare should provide funds and be responsible for the portion of the Postal Academy program that can be identified as basic education. Basically, these funds should be drawn from secondary education program sources.

The Department of Labor should provide funds and be responsible for the manpower, supportive services (including streetwork), and some administrative portions of the program. Since the Postal Academies no longer have Public Service Careers elements, and are very similar in objectives to the NYC-2 program, serious consideration should be given to having the latter program assume prime responsibility for the funding and monitoring of the Department's portion of the Postal Academy program.

VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary

The Postal Academy program was a bold experiment for a Federal agency such as the U. S. Postal Service. Like the private corporations that sponsored street academies in New York City, the Postal Service saw an opportunity to utilize its resources and talents to be of service to disadvantaged youth.

As in most experiments, there were both successes and failures. The prime objective of the program--to educate and motivate disadvantaged school dropouts--appears to be the strongest part of the program and generally is being achieved. Most of the students interviewed felt that they were learning more than they had in public school and the ETS testing results corroborate their feelings. The interviews with Postal Academy staff and students also revealed some significant changes and improvements in student motivation.

It was intended that the Postal Academies become involved in their communities. Most academies participate to some extent in community affairs and are considered assets to the localities in which they operate.

One major program assumption was that Postal employees were willing and able to competently staff the local Postal Academies. With the aid of a comprehensive program of staff

development, the postal employees have evolved into a high quality staff, particularly in its ability to relate to and motivate the students.

The major weaknesses in the Postal Academy program tend to be in the area of meeting the manpower needs of the students. One of the students' greatest needs is for part-time jobs while attending the Academy. These jobs were to have been provided by the Postal Service but they have not been forthcoming in the quantity called for in the original plan. Doubtless, the lack of adequate part-time jobs causes many students to terminate early.

Another part of the program that has fallen short of expectations has been the development of postal careers for both Academy students and lower-level postal employees. The upgrading portion of the program has been abandoned without success and very few Postal Academy students have entered postal careers or seem interested in doing so.

The Postal Academy program has been very aggressive in promoting college opportunities for its students but has developed only limited capability in serving students needing non-college careers, jobs, and training. The Postal Academy dropout rate may be higher than anticipated

partly because of the lack of occupational training and other alternatives for students who are not college bound.

A major problem at this point in time (18 months since program inception) is that the program is operating at only 62 percent of capacity. The result is a very high per student cost that cannot continue to be justified by the fact that the program is new.

B. Conclusions

The record to date seems to justify continued Federal support for the Postal Academy, but only at a level where the program can operate at close to capacity with a student man-year cost comparable to the original plan (approximately $2,400). Based on the community interest in the program and the high regard that it enjoys, it should be possible with some modifications, to increase enrollment levels rather than decrease capacity.

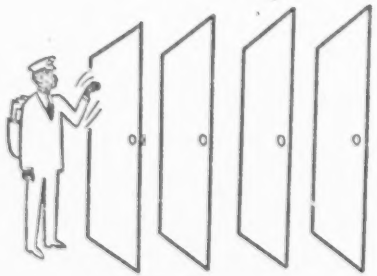
The objective of the Postal Academy should be re-defined to enable the program to measure its effectiveness in terms other than the number of students who pass the GED and the number who enter college.

The Postal Academy program should become a more integral part of the community manpower system so that it can obtain the benefits of that system. Such benefits include greater access to occupational training, job placement services, and career development information.

ATTACHMENT A

WHY THE POST OFFICE?

MULTIPLE BUSINESS OPERATION IN EVERY CITY AND GHETTO IN NATION



POSTAL EMPLOYEES WALK EVERY STREET-
KNOCK ON EVERY DOOR

MANY POSTAL EMPLOYEES LIVE IN GHETTO-STRONG COMMUNITY INTEREST AND PRIDE

POSTAL EMPLOYEES KNOWN, TRUSTED AND RESPECTED BY MOST INDIVIDUALS IN OR OUT OF GHETTO

POSTAL EMPLOYEES WALK IN AND OUT OF EVERY BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT DAILY

ATTACHMENT A

ATTACHMENT B

Source of Postal Academy Funds by Agency and Fiscal Year
(Millions of Dollars)

Source	FISCAL YEAR			Total
	1970	1971	1972	
Total	1.1	3.6	3.9	8.6
Office of Economic Opportunity	0.6	-0-	-0-	0.6
Department of Labor	0.4	1.2*	1.4	3.0
Direct	(0)	(0.7)	(1.4)	(2.1)
Civil Service Commission	(0.4)	(0.5)	(0)	(0.9)
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare	-0-	2.0	2.1	4.1
MDTA		(1.0)	* *	
Adult Basic Education Act		(1.0)	* *	
Postal Service	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.9

* Excludes $110,000 set aside for evaluation.
** Exact source not determined. May be all MDTA.

ATTACHMENT B

ATTACHMENT C

POSTAL ACADEMY PROGRAM BUDGET

ATTACHMENT C

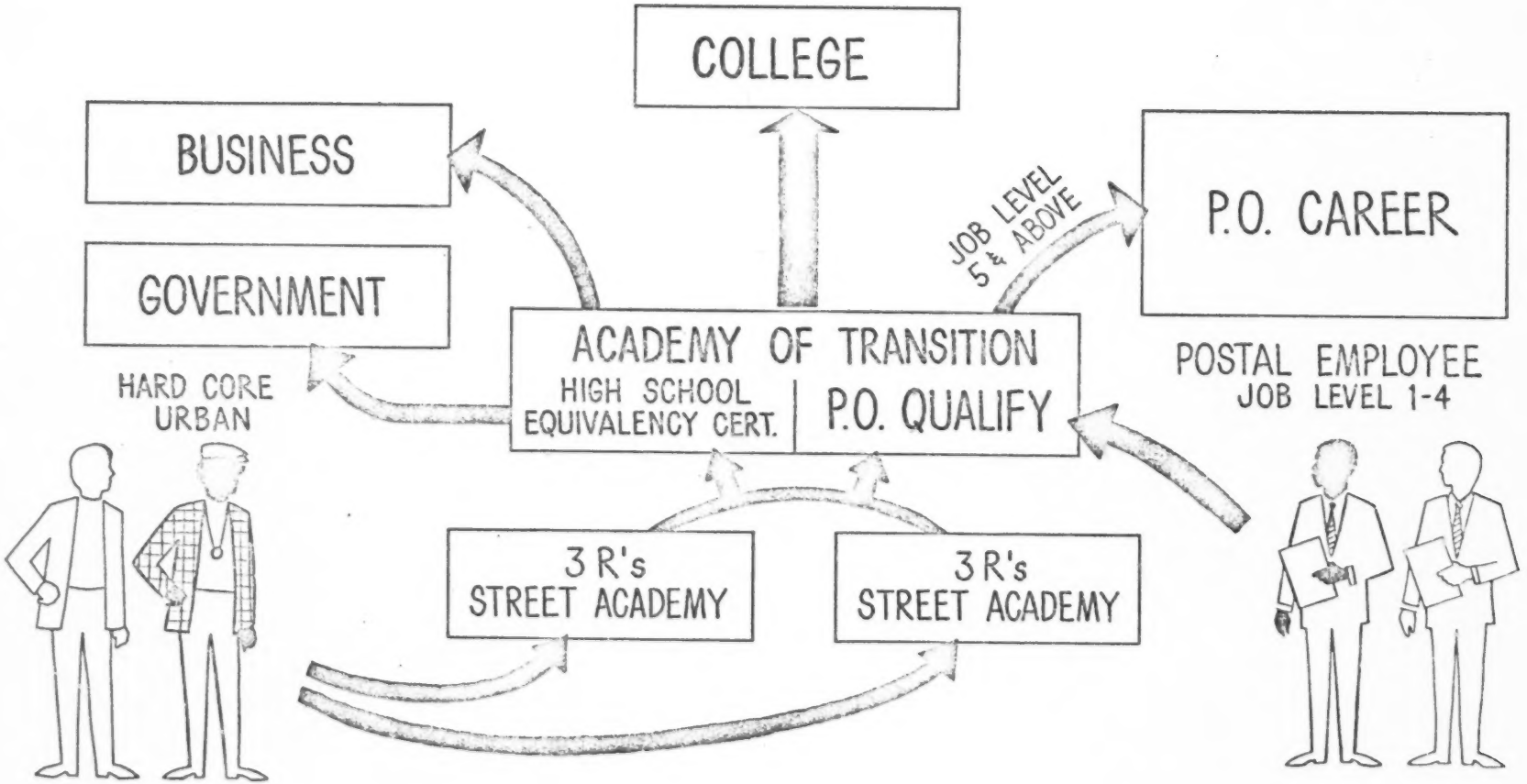
FISCAL YEARS 1970-73

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY-70		FY-71		FY-72		FY-73	
	PLANNED	ACTUAL	PLANNED	ACTUAL	PLANNED	REVISED	6 CITIES	12 CITIES
Salaries	$ 351	$333	$2,129	$1,955	$2,470	$2,474	$2,554	$4,835
Benefits	23	20	185	143	202	202	206	405
Travel	35	25	150	151	160	155	150	440
Transportation Of Things	-	-	-	-	5	25	35	40
Contract	118	76	105	158	55	70	70	230
Training	300	234	105	114	215	215	175	522
Improvements	80	40	225	180	45	45	45	225
Equipment	80	80	189	155	40	125	125	180
Space	50	45	340	265	367	361	380	723
Supplies & Services	125	110	253	226	309	234	259	493
Total	$1,162	$963	$3,652	$3,344	$3,868	$3,906	$3,999	$8,193

ATTACHMENT C

ATTACHMENT D



ATTACHMENT D

ATTACHMENT E

Selected Program Data by City
As of June 1971

	Cumulative Enrollment	Current Students (3rd Term)	Early Terminees (Cumulative)	Completed Program	Passed GED	Average Daily Attendance (Percent)
Total	1,644	809	824*	11	64	70
Atlanta	308	139	161	8	16	81
Chicago	281	155	126	-	2	70
Detroit	251	123	126	2	25	70
Newark	110	39	71	-	1	68
San Francisco	300	159	141	-	7	68
Washington	394	194	199	1	13	60

* 221 terminated for reasons of employment, armed services, or school.

ATTACHMENT E

ATTACHMENT F

ATTACHMENT F

Part-time Employment of Students
During Third Term Ending June 1971

	Percent Employed		
	Total	Post Office	Other
Total	41*	36	5
Atlanta	68	55	13
Chicago	57	56	1
Detroit	34	30	4
Newark	33	28	5
San Francisco	41	39	2
Washington	14	10	4

*Based on a total of 809 students enrolled at the end of the third term.

ATTACHMENT G

ATTACHMENT G

Selected Characteristics of Current Students
Compared With Two Prior Terms

Characteristics	Current Students	Third Term	First Term
Age (Average)	18.4	18.6	17.7
Sex: (Percent)			
Male	53	58	60
Female	47	42	40
Education:			
Average Years Completed	10.2	9.7	10.2
On Welfare (Percent)	34	30	23
Police Record (Percent)	29	28	32
Need Employment (Percent)	55	61	60

Source: Current student figures based on random sample of enrollee records (143 in sample) in four cities visited. First and third term based on Postal Academy records.

ATTACHMENT H

ATTACHMENT H

Students, Terminees and Graduates
by Reasons for Leaving Public School

(Percent Distribution)

Reasons	Students	Terminees	Graduates
Total Sample	143	107	42
Percent	100	100	100
Conflict with Teacher	18	6	5
Lost Interest	19	20	14
Was not Learning	13	4	7
Pregnant	10	8	12
To Seek Employment	4	10	26
Personal or Family Problem	6	5	-
Too Old	6	4	-
Other (Sick, moved, married, etc.)	10	14	19
Information not Available	15	30	17

Source: Random sample of enrollee records in four cities visited.

ATTACHMENT 1

ATTACHMENT I

Selected Characteristics of Active Students,
Terminees and Graduates at Time of Enrollment

Characteristics	Active Students	Terminees	Graduates
Number in Sample	143	107	42
Age (Average)	18.4	18.6	19.4
Sex: (Percent)			
Male	53	65	67
Female	47	35	33
Education			
Average Years Completed	10.2	10.1	10.6
On Welfare (Percent)	34	27	21
Police Record (Percent)	29	34	30
Need Employment (Percent)	55	43	67

Source: Random sample of enrollee records in four cities visited.